

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-19

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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P R 121900Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 535

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T VIENNA 9333

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET DELEGATE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING SOCIAL OCCASION ON NOVEMBER 11, US DEPREP HAD BRIEF CONVERSATION ON CURRENT STATUS OF MBFR TALKS WITH SOVIET DELEGATION MEMBER KVITSINSKIY, WHO HAD JUST ARRIVED FROM MOSCOW. KVITSINSKIY REPEATEDLY STATED SOVIET DESIRE TO MOVE AHEAD TO SPECIFIC NEGOTIATION ON FORCE REDUCTION WITHOUT LENGTHY PRELIMINARIES AND MADE A NUMBER OF COMMENTS ELUCIDATING SOVIET POSITION. END SUMMARY.

2. KVITSINSKIY BEGAN CONVERSATION BY EXPRESSING HOPE THAT ALLIES WOULD MOVE RAPIDLY TO DISCUSSION OF
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SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF FORCE REDUCTION. THE PARTICI-

PANTS SHOULD DISPENSE WITH ORATORY AND RHETORIC. SOVIETS HAD IMPRESSION THAT SOME EUROPEAN ALLIES WISHED TO HAVE LONG DISCUSSION ON PRINCIPLES AND PHASING. THESE PRELIMINARIES WERE UNNECESSARY. PARTICIPANTS SHOULD MOVE AHEAD TO PRACTICAL DISCUSSION OF REDUCTION. THIS IS WHY SOVIETS HAD TABLED THEIR SPECIFIC PROPOSAL. US DEP-REP SAID ALLIES HAD BUSINESS-LIKE APPROACH AND WANTED TO DISCUSS SPECIFICS. HOWEVER, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT UNDERLYING THE SOVIET PROPOSAL WAS A SPECIFIC INTEL-LECTUAL CONCEPT OF THE SUBJECT MATTER. THE ALLIES HAD THEMSELVES ALREADY PUT FORWARD CERTAIN PROPOSALS IN THEIR OPENING STATEMENTS, WHICH WERE BASED ON A DIFFERING CONCEPTUAL APPROACH. WEST WAS ALL FOR DISCUSSING PRACTICAL MATTERS, BUT IT WAS EQUALLY OBVIOUS THAT THE DIFFERENCES IN THESE CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES ACCOUNTED FOR DIFFERENT PROPOSALS MADE BY WEST AND EAST, AND THEREFORE THAT THESE UNDERLYING CONCEPTS WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE ALLIES HAD NO INTENTION OF LIMITING DISCUSSION TO PROPOSALS MADE ON THE BASIS OF THE SOVIET APPROACH TO THE NEGOTIATIONS IN THE NAME OF GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS RAPIDLY. KVITSINSKIY SAID HE WAS FULLY AWARE OF NATURE OF ALLIED PROPOSALS. LATTER WERE BASED ON CONCEPT OF ASYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS. THIS WAS NOT A PRODUCTIVE BASIS OF DISCUSSION. THE PARTICIPANTS SHOULD USE THE CURRENT RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES, WHICH HAD AFTER ALL RESULTED IN A CERTAIN DEGREE OF SECURITY, AND THEN REDUCE FROM THAT BASIS.

3. US DEP REP ASKED KVITSINSKIY WHY, ACCEPTING THAT BOTH SIDES WISHED TO GET DOWN TO SERIOUS NEGOTIATION, THE SOVIETS HAD TABLED A FORMAL PROPOSAL AT THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. KVITSINSKIY REPLIED THAT HE HIMSELF HAD ARGUED FOR TABLING A TYPE OF SKELETON PROPOSAL WITH ONLY THE MAIN LINES OF A SOVIET APPROACH BUT HAD BEEN OVERRULED IN FAVOR OF A MORE COMPLETE DOCUMENT. HE WISHED TO STRESS THAT IN ANY EVENT THE SOVIETS WISHED TO BE

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FLEXIBLE AND WERE OPEN TO CHANGES IN THEIR PROPOSAL.

4. US DEPREP POINTED OUT THAT ALLIES HAD ALREADY PROPOSED TWO STAGES OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH US/SOVIET REDUCTIONS IN FIRST STAGE. KVITSINSKIY REPLIED THAT THIS WAS A THEORETICAL POSSIBILITY BUT THAT SOVIET MILITARY INSISTED THAT ALLIED FORCES, PARTICULARLY THE BUNDESWEHR AND BRITISH

FORCES, BE INCLUDED IN ANY REDUCTIONS. WHO COULD GIVE ASSURANCES THAT THESE FORCES WOULD IN FACT BE REDUCED IF NEGOTIATIONS WERE DIVIDED INTO TWO PHASES AND TREATMENT OF EUROPEAN FORCES WAS POSTPONED TO THE SECOND PHASE? KVITSINSKIY CONTINUED THAT AFTER ALL, THE REDUCTIONS PROPOSED BY THE SOVIETS WERE NOT VERY LARGE. THEY SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO SATISFY US POLITICAL PRESSURES WITHOUT DISLOCATIONS ON EITHER SIDE. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION, KVITSINSKIY SAID THE SOVIETS DID NOT HAVE IN MIND AGREEING IN THE NEGOTIATIONS ON SPECIFIC FORCE STRENGTH FIGURES AS A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATING REDUCTIONS. EACH SIDE HAD ITS OWN INFORMATION ON FORCE STRENGTH OF THE OTHER. ON THE BASIS OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL, THIS INFORMATION WAS ADEQUATE. SPECIFICALLY DESIGNATED FORCES TO BE WITHDRAWN WOULD BE SPECIFIED AND THIS KNOWLEDGE, COMBINED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE EACH SIDE HAD OF THE FORCE STRENGTH OF THE OTHER SIDE, SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO GIVE ASSURANCES THAT THE PROPOSED PERCENTAGES HAD BEEN FULFILLED. IF THE ALLIES WISHED TO MAKE PUBLIC OVERALL STRENGTH FIGURES OF THEIR OWN FOR WESTERN OPINION, THEY COULD DO SO, BUT THIS WAS NOT THE SOVIET INTENTION. KVITSINSKIY REPEATED THAT THE REDUCTION ENTAILED IN THE SOVIET PROPOSAL WERE NOT SO LARGE THAT THEY WOULD BE DESTABILIZING AND THAT PRECISE ACCURACY WITHIN A MATTER OF THOUSANDS WAS NOT AFTER ALL ESSENTIAL GIVEN THESE LIMITED DIMENSIONS. IF THIS EXPERIENCE PAID OFF, THERE COULD LATER BE PERHAPS MORE SUBSTANTIAL STEPS, BUT THE WEST SHOULD NOT MAKE SO MUCH DRAMA OF THESE FIRST STAGES. THEY WERE NOT THAT IMPORTANT INTRINSICALLY.

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5. US DEPREP POINTED OUT ALLIES HAD PROPOSED A COMMON CEILING IN GROUND FORCES. KVITSINSKIY REPLIED THAT THIS COURSE COULD NOT BE FOLLOWED. IT WOULD ENTAIL TOO MANY SOVIET WITHDRAWALS. THE SOVIET FORCES FORMED THE MAIN COMPONENT OF THE WARSAW PACT FORCES. MAJOR WITHDRAWALS OF SOVIET FORCES WOULD CREATE A NEED FOR FUNDAMENTAL REORGANIZATION AND DISLOCATE THE PRESENT SITUATION. HE AGAIN ASKED WHETHER IT COULD BE EXPECTED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD GET DOWN TO REAL BUSINESS BEFORE CHRISTMAS. US DEP REP REPLIED THAT THERE WAS GOOD REASON TO EXPECT THIS SINCE WEST HAD ALREADY ADVANCED RATHER SPECIFIC PROPOSALS, AND, ALTHOUGH
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